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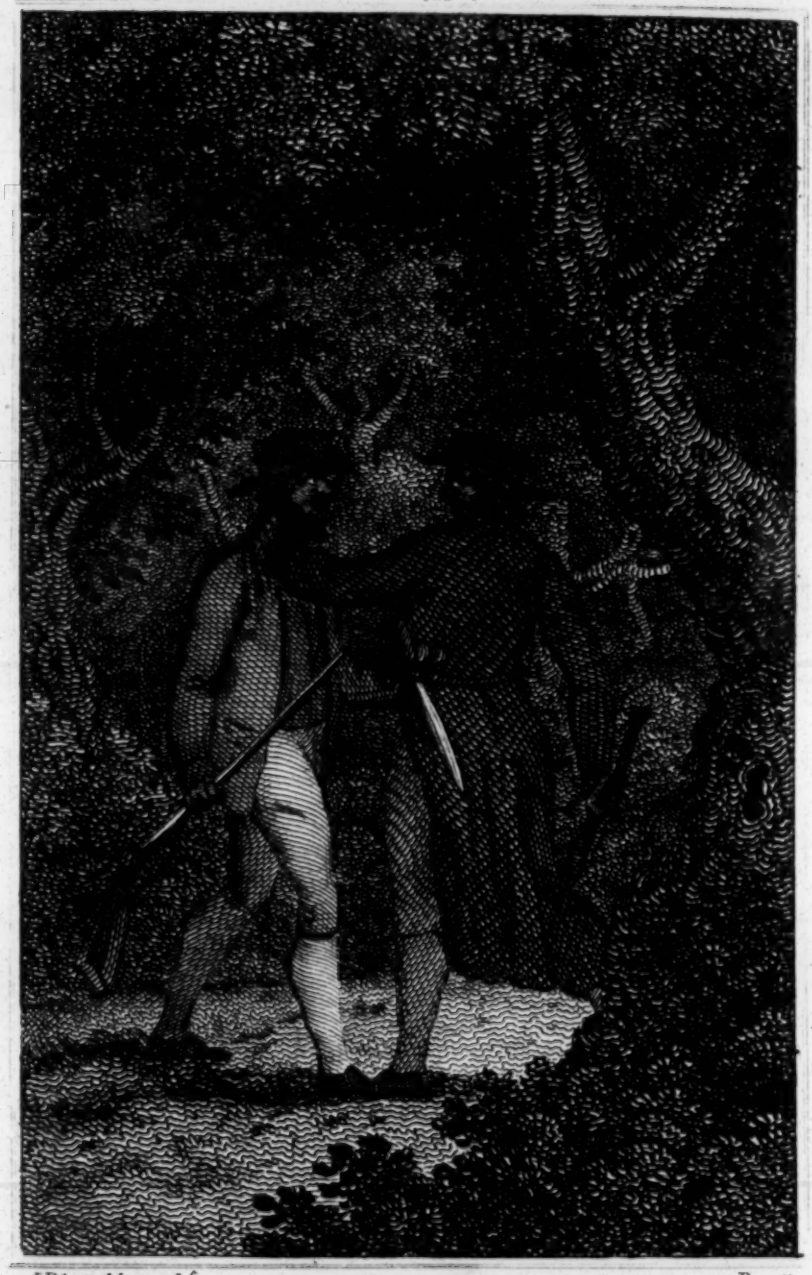

J. Wyatt del et sculp.

Page 11.

Wolfe accosted in his pursuit through the wood by a Robber.

THE

EXTRAORDINARY CONFESSION,

LIFE, AND SINGULAR ADVENTURES,

OF

WOLFE;

WHO WAS

THIRTY YEARS A NOTORIOUS

ROBBER,

Murderer, and Captain of a Gang

OF

FIFTY-THREE THIEVES.

To which is added the

WANDERING FUGITIVE;

OR THE

SURPRISING ESCAPES

OF

Frederic Winſon,

AN

ASSASIN.

O that theſe eyes had never ſeen the day!
THEN rage to murder ne'er had ſhown the way,
To ſhoot the wretch who brought me to decay.

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1800.

Frederic Wilton,

THE

ASSASSIN.

THE

LIFE

OF

WOLFE THE ROBBER.

IN a village in *Germany*, ſituated near the *Black Foreſt*, ſtood the remains of a caſtle, which had been a long time in a ruinous condition. A gang of robbers took poſſeſſion of it, and nightly iſſued from thence to commit their depredations. After continuing their infamous practices for a number of years, ſubſiſting entirely by plunder, juſtice at laſt put an end to their mode of life. Among the reſt who were apprehended, was the captain of the gang; who being ordered for trial early the next morning, occaſioned the town-hall to be filled with a numerous concourſe of people.

At the appointed hour he was brought to the bar. He was of a gigantic make, near ſeven feet high; his robuſt limbs exactly correſponded with his extraordinary ſize. His black and buſhy hair covered part of his ſunburnt face, which was diſfigured by two large ſcars acroſs his left cheek. His eye (for he had but one left) flaſhed like lightning when he looked upon the court. The judge exhorted him to ſpeak the truth, and not aggravate his guilt by ſtubbornneſs. Notwithſtanding his ſavage look and haughty mien, which ſeemed to indicate a contrary behaviour, to the aſtoniſhment of every ſpectator, he thus began:

"My Lord, and Gentlemen,

"I am in your power, and am well aware that nothing can avert my impending doom. However, I will candidly confeſs my crimes, their origin, and their progreſs; being ſtrongly perſuaded that the hiſtory of my life muſt afford a uſeful leſſon to judges, and teach

the guardians of the people to be careful how they inflict punishments, if they will not make a complete rogue of many a hapless wretch, who would have been recalled to his duty, and preserved to the human society, by gentle treatment. I never should have commenced robber, had not the too great severity of the laws made me an enemy to mankind, and hurried me to the brink of dread despair.

I am the son of an inkeeper at A—, of the name of WOLFE, whose death happened about the time I had reached my twenty-fourth year. I succeeded him in his business; which being but indifferent, afforded me a deal of leisure time. Being an only son, I was spoiled by my parents, who seemed highly pleased with my wanton pranks, and indulged me in the most foolish fond manner. Grown-up girls complained of my impudence when I was only twelve years old; and the boys of the village paid homage to my inventive genius. Nature had not been deficient with respect to bodily endowments; but an unfortunate kick from a horse so disfigured my face, that the girls of the village shunned me, and my play-fellows took every opportunity of holding me up as an object of ridicule. The more my female acquaintances avoided me, the stronger grew my desire of pleasing. As I grew up, I was given to sensuality; and at last persuaded myself to be in love. The object of my attachment treated me with scorn; and I had reason to apprehend that my rivals were more successful than myself. But the girl being poor, I flattered myself that her heart, which was inaccessible to my vows and prayers, would yield to presents, which I knew not how to procure, the small income of my business being scarce sufficient to defray the expences I was at in vainly endeavouring to render my person less disgusting. Naturally addicted to idleness, and too proud to retrench my expensive mode of life, I had only one resource left to better my fortune—a desperate one, though thousands had often tried it with success.

The village in which I lived gave me frequent opportunities of committing depradations on the game;

and the money I thus procured regularly became the property of my miſtreſs. *Robert*, a game-keeper to the lord of the manor, was one of the admirers of *Jenny* (the girl who had ſecured my affections). He ſoon perceived the advantage I had over him, through my liberality; and ſpurred on by jealouſy, watched me with the eyes of *Argus*. He reſorted to the *Sun* (the inn I generally uſed) more frequently than ever; and his prying eye ſoon diſcovered the fountain from whence ſprang my liberal gifts.

A very ſevere law againſt game-ſtealing had been enacted not long before; and *Robert* loſt no opportunity of getting rid of his rival. He ſucceeded but too ſoon. I was caught in the very act of ſhooting a deer, and condemned to be ſent to the houſe of correction. It coſt me all the little property I had left, to obtain my pardon. *Robert* had gained his end; and *Jenny*'s heart was loſt to me. Glowing reſentment filled my breaſt; and I was determined to ſeize the firſt opportunity that preſented itſelf of being revenged. Poverty and want, hunger and deſpair, tempted me once more to my former practice; and *Robert*'s watchfulneſs ſurpriſed me a ſecond time. Being now reduced to the loweſt ſtate of wretchedneſs, it was not in my power to gild the palm of juſtice any more; and I was committed for a whole year to the houſe of correction. Every laſh of the whip increaſed my reſentment; the ſeparation from my miſtreſs ſtrengthened my paſſion; and I no ſooner obtained my liberty than love and revenge hurried me on to my native place. I flew to *Jenny*; but was denied admittance, and treated with ſcorn. Pinching want having ſubdued my pride and lazineſs, I offered my ſervices to the rich in the village; but nobody would employ a fellow who had been impriſoned in the houſe of correction.

Preſſed by hunger and dire neceſſity, and baffled in all my attempts at getting an honeſt livelihood, I again renewed my depredations on the game, and was a third time entrapped by *Robert*'s watchfulneſs. My repeated tranſgreſſions having aggravated my guilt, the judges

ſentenced me to have the mark of a gibbet burnt on my back, and to work three years in the fortifications. At the cloſe of that term I recovered my liberty; and here begins a new period of my life.

I was entirely changed, having entered the fortreſs as a common tranſgreſſor, and left it as a conſummate villain. I was not entirely deſtitute of all ſentiments of honour when I went in; but the few remaining ſparks of ambition were ſoon extinguiſhed by ignominy, being confined in one room with twenty-three malefactors, two of whom were murderers, and all the reſt famous thieves and vagabonds. I was laughed at whenever I mentioned the name of God, and every day urged to utter blaſphemies againſt our holy redeemer. My fellow-priſoners ſung the moſt obſcene ſongs to me, which I could not hear without diſguſt and horror, and committed actions which I could not behold without bluſhing. Every day new rogueries were related, or the moſt wicked deſigns fabricated.

At firſt I avoided the company of theſe abominable wretches as much as poſſible, hiding myſelf in the obſcureſt corner of the priſon. But I wanted a companion in my ſolitude; and the cruelty of the gaoler had refuſed me even the conſolation of taking my dog with me. My labour was hard, and my health declining. I needed aſſiſtance; and was in want of comfort, which, ſcanty as it was, I could not obtain without ſacrificing the laſt remains of my conſcience.

Thus I uſed myſelf by degrees to hear without diſguſt the moſt horrid language; and to behold without averſion, and at length with ſecret pleaſure, the moſt ſhocking actions. Before the expiration of my impriſonment I was ſuperior in wickedneſs to my inſtructors, and began to thirſt with increaſing impatience for liberty and revenge. I hated the whole human race. I fancied myſelf a martyr to the natural rights of man, and a victim of glaring injuſtice. Seized with the burning fangs of deſpair, I vowed the moſt implacable revenge to the whole human race; and my actions ſince have fully proved that I have kept my word.

The firſt idea which ruſhed upon my mind as ſoon as I found myſelf at liberty, was that of viſiting my native village. I had not indeed the moſt diſtant hope of meeting with any aſſiſtance to relieve my diſtreſs; but I entertained the moſt ſanguine one of glutting my revenge. I quickened my ſteps, anticipating the pleaſure it would afford me to ſtrike my enemies with terror on my firſt appearance, and to feaſt my eyes on the pangs of thoſe victims whom I had devoted to my vengeance.

The bells were ringing to ſummon the inhabitants to worſhip, when I made my appearance in the market-place. I was ſoon known by the people who were going to church; and every one who met me ſtarted back at the ſight of me. I ſeated myſelf on a large ſtone oppoſite it. I ſat there ſome ſhort time, and at laſt roſe up with burning rage, having ſeen all my former acquaintance paſs by me with viſible contempt, ſcarcely deigning to look at me. I left my ſtation in an agony of vexation, to find out a lodging. As I was turning round the corner of a ſtreet, I met my faithleſs and abandoned *Jenny*. "My dear *Wolfe!*" ſhe exclaimed, and offered to embrace me. "God be praiſed that you are returned at laſt. I have ſhed many a bitter tear during your abſence." Hunger and miſery were marked in her face; and I beheld with horror that ſhe was infected with a moſt loathſome illneſs. Her tattered raiment, and her whole appearance plainly beſpoke what a miſerable wretch ſhe was. I ſoon gueſſed the cauſe of her deplorable ſituation, concluding, by the ſight of ſome dragoons, that ſoldiers had been quartered in the village. "Soldier's ſtrumpet!" I exclaimed, and turned my back to her with an exulting laughter. It gave me the higheſt ſatisfaction to ſee her infidelity rewarded in ſo ſhocking a manner.

My mother was dead, and my houſe had been ſold for the benefit of the creditors. I had no friend, no money, except a few groats. Every body ſhunned me like a mad dog. But I was dead to ſhame and diſgrace. After my firſt impriſonment, I had ſhunned all human

ſociety, becauſe I could not ſtand the contempt I everywhere met with. Now I intruded myſelf upon them; and it afforded me a malicious ſatisfaction to drive them away by my appearance. It gave me a pleaſure, becauſe I had nothing more to loſe, and nobody to care for. I had no longer occaſion for the leaſt good quality, becauſe nobody believed I had one left. Neceſſity and thoughtleſſneſs had once compelled me to ſin; but now I did it voluntarily, becauſe it gave me pleaſure.

I had again recourſe to game-ſtealing. Hunting had always been the exerciſe I moſt delighted in; and life called for ſupport. But this was not the ſole motive which impelled me. The deſire of bidding defiance to the laws, and to infringe the prerogative of the prince, was an additional excitement. I had not the leaſt apprehenſion of ever being taken up again; for I now had a ball in readineſs to ſtop the mouth of my informer; and I was certain of hitting my mark.

I killed all the deer which came in my way. I only ſold a few of the pieces on the frontiers; the remainder I left behind to rot. I lived very ſparing, to afford the expence of powder and ſhot.

This mode of life I continued for ſeveral months, without being detected. One morning I was rambling through the foreſt purſuing the traces of a deer. Having hunted two hours without any ſucceſs, I had given up all hopes of catching it, when I ſaw it on a ſudden within my reach. I took my aim, and was preparing to fire; but ſeeing a hat upon the ground, I ſuddenly ſtarted back. I looked about with great caution, and beheld *Robert* the game-keeper ſtanding behind the trunk of a tree, aiming at the very deer I intended to kill. My blood froze in my veins when I beheld the author of all my misfortunes. The very man whom I hated moſt of the whole human race, was now within the reach of my fuſee. Infernal joy thrilled my whole frame. I would not have exchanged my gun for a kingdom. The burning revenge which till then had been kindling in my boſom, now broke forth with redoubled fury; and I was going to put an end to my

adverſary's life, when an inviſible hand ſeemed to check my progreſs. I trembled violently as I directed my gun; a chilly ſweat bedewed my face; my teeth chattered; and every nerve was quivering. I heſitated a minute—one more elapſed—than a third. Revenge and conſcience were ſtruggling hard for victory. The former prevailed, and *Robert* lay weltering in his blood.

My gun dropped on the ground as *Robert* fell. "*Murderer!*" I exclaimed, with quivering lips. The foreſt was ſilent; and the word ſeemed to echo. Advancing nearer to the ſpot where my enemy lay ſwimming in his blood, I ſaw him juſt expire. Petrified with horror, I ſtood for a moment motionleſs before my murdered foe; at length a yelling laughter reſtored me to the uſe of my ſenſes. "Wilt thou any more tell tales, good friend?" ſaid I, ſtepping nearer, and turning him upon his back. His eyes were wide open. I again grew ſerious. Every power of utterance forſook me; and the moſt horrid ſenſations chilled my heart.

'Till this circumſtance I had been a tranſgreſſor of the laws, through the diſgrace they had made me ſuffer; but now I had perpetrated a deed for which I had not yet atoned. An hour before that horrid action, I thought a more abject being than myſelf exiſted nowhere; but now I began to fancy that my ſituation then was enviable to my preſent ſtated of mind.

The idea of having forfeited my life froze my very ſoul with dreadful fear. I wiſhed ardently that it might be in my power to reſtore to life my ſlain enemy, and racked my brain to recall to my recollection all the injuries he had made me ſuffer; but, ſtrange to tell, my memory ſeemed to be entirely extinguiſhed. I could not recall a ſhadow of all the ideas, which, but a quarter of an hour ago, had filled my ſoul with glowing revenge. I could not conceive how I could commit ſuch a horrid deed.

I was ſtill ſtanding by the body in a ſtate of ſtupefaction, when I was rouſed from my deſpondency by the ſmacking of whips and the creeking of waggons on

the high road, which was at a conſiderable diſtance from the ſpot I ſtood on.

I went on unthinkingly deeper into the foreſt; and recollecting that *Robert* had been uſed to wear a watch, I wiſhed to get hold of it. I ſtruggled a few moments with my conſcience; and having ſummoned up all my boldneſs, determined to go back and take it.

I found what I expected; and in a green purſe a little more than a dollar, in ſilver coin. As I was going to put them both in my pocket, I ſuddenly ſtarted back; and I debated in my mind whether I ſhould take it or not. It was not through any ſenſe of ſhame, nor the fear of aggravating the crime of murder by adding robbery to it; but the contempt I held him in, that induced me to fling the watch upon the ground, and to content myſelf with only half the money. I wiſhed to be thought his enemy, not his plunderer.

I now fled deeper into the foreſt. I knew that it extended four *German** miles toward the North, where the frontiers of the country began. I fled on the wings of fear till noon. The ſwiftneſs of my flight had diſpelled the agony of my conſcience; which returned with redoubled violence as my ſtrength began to wear away; a thouſand horrid phantoms tortured my fancy, and filled my ſoul with dreadful bodings.

In this horrid ſtate I finiſhed the ſixth hour of my flight—an hour abounding with agonies which baffle all deſcription.

Gloomy and ſlow, I had purſued a narrow foot-path, which led through the deepeſt thicket; when ſuddenly a voice, at once rough and commanding, ordered me to ſtop. The voice was not far off. The agony and deſpair which had taken ſuch poſſeſſion of my ſoul, had made me regardleſs of the objects around me. My eyes were caſt to the ground; and part of my face I had covered with my hat. I ſtartled at the ſound; and lifting up my eyes, I ſaw a ſavage looking man coming toward me. He was armed with an enormous club;

* A German mile is five and a half Engliſh.

his figure was of a monſtrous ſize—at leaſt my firſt ſurpriſe had made him appear ſo; and the colour of his face was of a mulatto hue, which gave to the white of a ſquinting eye additional terrors. He had no girdle; but his great coat not having buttons, was tied with a thick cord; to which a tremendous knife and a brace of piſtols were faſtened I had quickened my ſteps when I firſt beheld him; but he ſoon overtook me, and ſtopped me with a powerful arm.

"Who art thou?" thundered the frightful figure in my ear.

"Thy equal," I replied, "if thou art really what thy appearance indicates."

"This is not the right way. What buſineſs haſt thou here?"

"And what right have you to queſtion me?" I anſwered in a reſolute and determined tone.

This dreadful fellow then ſurveyed me all over. "Thou art an impudent beggar," he ſaid at laſt.

"Very poſſible. I have been one but yeſterday."

He laughed; and putting on a moſt horrible grin, exclaimed, "My honeſt friend, I hope thou doſt not preſume to be thought any thing better."

"That is nothing to thee," I replied; and turned from him, offering to purſue my way.

"Fair and ſoftly, my dear boy," ſaid he, "why in ſuch a hurry? What mighty buſineſs occaſions ſuch a terrible haſte?"

I muſed a moment, agitated to the higheſt degree; and replied, in a low tone of voice, "life is ſhort, and hell everlaſting."

Theſe words made him ſtare at me with a ghaſtly look, "I will be damned," ſaid he, "if thou haſt not ſtumbled on a gallows in thy way."

"It may come to that one time. Farewell, comrade."

"Stop a moment, longer," he exclaimed. He then took a tin bottle from his hunting pouch; and after ſwallowing a large draught, preſented it to me. The hurry of my fright, and the dreadful agonies I had ſuffered in my mind, had reduced me to a very low ſtate;

and my parched lips had not tasted one refreshing drop the whole of that unfortunate day. Famine had stared me dreadfully in the face in that extensive forest, where for three miles around no refreshment could be procured. I therefore joyfully accepted his offer. I greedily swallowed the whole contents of the bottle, and soon found its exhilirating effects. My heart was expanded with new courage. The hope, nay the love of life returned as lively as ever. I began to fancy that I was not completely miserable. So much relief that welcome draught afforded me, that my situation began to appear less dreadful to me; since I found, at last, after a thousand frustrated hopes, that there existed a being who bore some resemblance to myself. In the desponding state I was, previous to drinking this liquor, I would not have hesitated at pledging the health of an infernal spirit, in order to have a confidant.

Meanwhile my new companion had stretched himself upon the grass; and I followed his example.

"Thy brandy has given me new life," said I, quite elated. "We must be better acquainted with each other."

He made no reply; but struck fire, and lighted his pipe.

"Is it long since thou hast carried on this business?"

He stared at me; and said, "what means that question?"

Being now grown bolder, I took the knife from his girdle, and continued my discourse.

"Has this instrument done much execution?"

"Who art thou?" he roared out in a terrible accent, at the same time flinging his pipe upon the ground, and starting up.

"A murderer, like thyself; but only a beginner."

He gazed at me very earnestly, and took up his pipe.

"Thou art no inhabitant of these districts, then," resumed he at length.

"I am. Hast thou never heard of *Wolfe*, the innkeeper at A—?"

He started up, as though he was frantic, exclaiming

with the greateſt ſurpriſe, "*Wolfe* the innkeeper, who has been puniſhed ſo ſeverely for game-ſtealing!"

"That very man am I."

"Welcome, comrade, a thouſand times welcome!" he exclaimed, ſhaking me moſt heartily by the hand, "how happy am I to find thee at laſt. I have been many months ſeeking you. I know you very well; am acquainted with all you have ſuffered; and have been wiſhing for thy aſſiſtance this great while."

"For *my* aſſiſtance! To what purpoſe?"

"Everybody ſpeaks of thee. Thou haſt many enemies; haſt ſuffered many injuries, and been entirely ruined, through the unheard-of ſeverity with which thou haſt been perſecuted. They have immured thee in the houſe of correction; have treated thee like a galley-ſlave at the fortreſs; ſtripped thee of thy fortune, and reduced thee to beggary, merely becauſe thou haſt killed a few paltry deer, which the prince ſuffers to prey on our corn, and to rob us of the fruit of our diligence. Brother, brother, is it come to that, that a human being is valued leſs than a hare or a boar? Are we not better than the wild beaſts of the field? I am aſtoniſhed that a fellow like yourſelf could brook ſuch cruel injuries."

"What could I do?"

"That we will ſoon ſee. But pray tell me, whence doſt thou come, and on what errand?"

I then related my whole hiſtory to him. He could ſcarcely find patience to hear the end of it; but looked at me with the greateſt vivacity, pulling me after him with all his ſtrength.

"Come, along brother," ſays he. "Now thou art ripe, thou art the very man I wanted for my purpoſe. I ſhall acquire great honour by introducing thee to our commonwealth."

"Whither art thou going to conduct me?"

"Don't aſk queſtions. You ſhall ſoon know." He then dragged me forcibly after him.

As we proceeded, the foreſt appeared more and more intricated, impenetrable, and gloomy. Neither of us

ſpoke a word; and I was ſuddenly rouſed from my apathy by the whiſtle of my leader. I looked around, and beheld myſelf at the declivity of a ſteep rock, projecting out of a deep cavern. A ſecond whiſtle anſwered from the bottom of the rock; a ladder roſe ſlowly; and a thundering voice hallooed, the winding cavern echoing to the ſound. My leader went down, firſt deſiring me to wait 'till he ſhould return. "I muſt ſecure the maſtiff," ſaid he, "which guards the entrance to our abode. As you are a ſtranger; and he is ſo ferocious; not knowing you, he would tear you to pieces." Having ſaid this, he deſcended into the cavern.

I was now ſtanding alone before the precipice; and was ſenſible of it. The imprudence of my leader did not eſcape me. I only wanted reſolution to pull up the ladder; and by that means ſhould have been reſtored to liberty, and have effected my eſcape without the leaſt danger of being overtaken by the inhabitants of the cavern. I felt an inclination to attempt it. Looking down into that dreadful abyſs, my mind was ſtruck with a faint idea of the bottomleſs pit of hell, from which there is no redemption to be expected. I began to ſhudder at the new ſcene of life I was going to be engaged in. Nothing could ſave me but ſudden flight. I worked myſelf up to a determination of doing it, and had already ſtretched out my hand to pull up the ladder; when ſuddenly I fancied I heard a thundering voice, as from the bottom of hell, roaring out, "What has a murderer to riſk?" My arm loſt its hold, and with it every power of motion. My doom was fixed; the hour of repentance was over; and the murder I had committed ſtood behind me like a mountain, ſhutting up for ever my return to the paths of virtue. My leader at this moment re-appeared, and bade me deſcend into the cavern. Having now no choice but to ſubmit to fatal neceſſity, I went down. After proceeding a few ſteps under the excavated rock, the paſſage grew larger, and I beheld ſome huts at a diſtance. Approaching ſtill farther, a round ſpot covered with

graſs appeared to my view. About twenty people were ſitting round a blazing fire. "Here," exclaimed my leader to them, "here I bring you a new member of our ſociety, whoſe name is not unknown to you. Riſe, and welcome the celebrated *Wolfe* of A—."

"*Wolfe!*" they all inſtantly exclaimed with one voice, ſtarting up, and forming a circle round me, men, women, and children. Their joy was cordial and ſincere. Their appearance was ſtamped with confidence, and even with reſpect for me. One ſqueezed my hand; another clapped me on the ſhoulder in a friendly manner. All ſeemed ſincerely rejoiced at ſeeing me; and the ſcene bore a ſtrong reſemblance to the meeting with an old beloved and long abſent acquaintance.

My unexpected arrival had interrupted their dinner. After greeting me, they preſſed me very earneſtly to partake of their meal; which was indeed very inviting, as it conſiſted of all kinds of veniſon and ſome ſtewed fruits. A goblet filled with delicious wine was handed about very liberally, which ſpread merriment and joviality around. Plenty and concord ſeemed to reign in their little ſociety; and every one ſtrove to manifeſt his joy at my preſence. I was ſeated between two females; which at their table was reckoned the higheſt mark of honour. Having expected to meet with the very refuſe of their ſex, how great was my aſtoniſhment when I found amid this gang of robbers, two of the moſt beautiful women I ever beheld. *Margaret*, the eldeſt and the handſomeſt, was called miſs; and did not appear to be above eighteen. *Maria*, the youngeſt, was married; but had ran away from her huſband, on account of his cruel behaviour. Her form was much ſuperior to the other; but her countenance was pale, and ſhe ſeemed of a delicate conſtitution. Upon the whole, ſhe was leſs ſtriking at firſt ſight than the lively *Margaret*. They ſeemed to contend who ſhould be the firſt to kindle my deſires. The beautiful *Margaret* endeavoured to remove my baſhfulneſs by wanton jokes. But I ſoon conceived an unconquerable diſlike to her; and the modeſt *Maria* took poſſeſſion of my heart.

"You ſee, brother," ſaid the man who introduced me, "how we live here. Every day is equally as pleaſant. Is it not true, comrades?"

"Yes; every day paſſes like the preſent," the whole gang exclaimed.

"If, therefore, you think you can reconcile yourſelf to our mode of life, ſtay with us, and be our captain. Do you conſent to it, comrades?"

An unanimous *yes* rent the air.

My imagination was now fired with wine and wanton deſires; my reaſon was lulled aſleep; and my blood highly heated. Human ſociety had baniſhed me; and here I found brotherly affection, good living, and confidence. Whatever choice I adopted, I could not eſcape the hand of puniſhing juſtice. But in a ſituation like this now offered me, I could at leaſt ſell my life dear. Voluptuouſneſs had ever been my ruling paſſion; and I had 'till then always been treated with ſcorn and contempt by the other ſex; but here I had a proſpect of being received with pleaſure. My reſolution coſt me very little trouble. After a moment's conſideration I exclaimed, "I will ſtay with you, comrades, if you will aſſign to me my charming neighbour."

All of them inſtantly agreed to my requeſt; ſo that I became in an unexpected manner the poſſeſſor of a madam, and the chief of a gang of robbers.

To be revenged on the prince in whoſe dominions I had ſuffered ſo much diſgrace, was the chief wiſh of my heart; and the firſt uſe I made of my new acquired authority, was to accompliſh that object. Our gang conſiſted of eight ſtout fellows, beſide myſelf; the reſt were all women and children. Previous to my joining them, they had never attempted any thing of conſequence. They chiefly confined themſelves to clandeſtinely pilfering the pantries and cellars of the richer ſort of peaſantry, and a little game-ſtealing; but never had recourſe to violent means. My views extended farther. I propoſed to declare open war againſt the game (the original cauſe of my diſgrace and ruin), and to rob the houſes of thoſe judges who had puniſhed me in ſo cruel a manner.

This object could not be accompliſhed without horſes, of which we were deſtitute; for the frontiers, where the dominions of my former ſovereign terminated, were diſtant at leaſt three miles. By means of houſebreaking, and a few highway robberies, we ſoon got plenty of money; when we ſent one of our aſſociates to a diſtant town to buy four horſes, fire-arms, powder, and ball. Thus furniſhed, the firſt tempeſtuous night we pillaged the houſes of thoſe hated judges; and whenever midnight darkneſs covered the face of the earth, we ſallied forth to deſtroy the game in thoſe parts where my misfortunes had commenced; and I always took care that my perſecutors ſhould know that *Wolfe* was the perſon who perpetrated theſe depredations.

Succeſs attending our nightly rambles, our boldneſs increaſed. We often way-laid the traveller on the high road; but notwithſtanding our ſyſtematic line of plunder, I took care never to commit a ſecond murder. The terror of my name ſoon ſpread itſelf over the country. No means were left untried by the magiſtrates to apprehend me. A great reward was offered for me, dead or alive; and a full pardon to any one of my aſſociates who would betray me. Notwithſtanding, I had the good luck to evade their watchfulneſs for a conſiderable time, and to fruſtrate every attempt made on my liberty.

I had carried on this diabolical trade a whole year, when I began to grow tired of it. The gang diſappointed my moſt ſanguine hopes; and I ſoon perceived how much my fancy, heated by wine and looſe deſires, had been impoſed upon, when I conſented to become the captain of theſe robbers. Hunger and want frequently ſupplied the place of luxury and eaſe, which I had been taught to expect; and often have I been obliged to riſk my life to procure a ſcanty meal, ſcarcely ſufficient to ſatisfy the cravings of an empty ſtomach. The viſionary image of brotherly concord diſappeared; and in its room was nothing to be ſeen but envy, ſuſpicion, and jealouſy, looſening the bands of our ſociety. The ſo-

lemn promiſe of an unconditional pardon to him who ſhould betray me, was a powerful temptation to lawleſs robbers. I was well aware of the dangers which ſurrounded me. My conſcience, which had been lulled aſleep, though never totally extinguiſhed, recovered its power by degrees. The hatred I bore the human race, now turned its dagger againſt my own boſom. I was reconciled to mankind, and curſed nobody but myſelf. On the higheſt ſummit of depravity, I was more inclined to tread in the ſteps of virtue than before I had committed the firſt lawleſs deed.

About this time a war had broke out in *Germany*, and recruits were everywhere raiſing. I thought this circumſtance might afford me the means of retreating in an honourable manner from my aſſociates, and enable me to become a uſeful member of ſociety. I accordingly wrote a letter to my prince, the copy of which you will find in my pocket-book."

This letter was produced, and read by the clerk. The purport of it was as follows:

"*If your highneſs does not think it inconſiſtent with your dignity to liſten to ſuch a villain as I am; if a criminal of my atrocity is not entirely excluded from your mercy, O then do not reject the humble petition of a repenting ſinner. I am a murderer and a robber. I have forfeited my life, and am purſued by the avenging hand of juſtice. I will deliver myſelf into the hands of the executive power. I deteſt life, and am not afraid of dying; but I wiſh to live, in order to repair my paſt crimes, and to make my peace with human ſociety, which I have ſo greatly offended. I hate vice, and have a ſtrong deſire to try the paths of honeſty and virtue. I have ſhown ſome capacity of being a terror to the ſtate; and I flatter myſelf that I have yet ſome abilities to render ſervices to the country which I have injured.*

I am ſenſible, that my life being forfeited, it does not become me to propoſe conditions to puniſhing juſtice. However, I am not yet chained in fetters. I am at preſent in full liberty; and fear has the leaſt ſhare in my prayer. It is mercy that I entreat. Let mercy ſupply the place of juſtice,

and ſpare my life. The remainder of it ſhall be entirely devoted to your ſervice. If your highneſs will vouchſafe to grant my humble prayer, let me know it through the medium of the public prints, and I will throw myſelf at your feet, confiding in your princely word."

"This petition," reſumed the delinquent, "was not taken notice of; neither was a ſecond and third. Having now not the leaſt glimmering of hope left as to obtaining a pardon, I took the reſolution of leaving the country, and of dying in the ſervice of the king of *Pruſſia* as a brave ſoldier.

I gave my gang the ſlip, and ſet forward on my journey. My road led me through a ſmall country-town, where I intended to paſs the night. A ſhort time back, a proclamation had been publiſhed, commanding a ſtrict examination of every traveller, the prince having taken a ſhare in the war, in his capacity as a member of the *German* empire. Juſt as I was going to enter this town, the gate-keeper of it was ſitting upon a bench before his houſe. He ſuffered me to ride by him; but as ſoon as I had entered the gate, he ſhut it, and demanded my paſsport, after he had firſt ſecured the bridle of my horſe. I was guarded againſt any accident of this kind, having provided myſelf with a paſſport, which I had taken from a merchant whom I had robbed. But this teſtimony would not ſatisfy him, and I was obliged to follow him to the bailiff's houſe. He ordered me to await his return at the door.

While the paſſport was examining, a numerous rabble began to aſſemble round me, attracted by my ſtrange figure. A whiſpering aroſe among them; and ſome were pointing firſt to me, and then to the horſe. The latter having been ſtolen by one of my aſſociates, my conſcience began to be alarmed. The gate-keeper returned with the paſſport; and told me that the bailiff, underſtanding I came from the ſeat of war, would be happy in half an hour's converſation with me, to gain ſome information reſpecting the ſituation of our army. Apprehending this meſſage was only a trap to get me

into his power without reſiſtance, I returned no anſwer, but immediately clapped ſpurs to my horſe, and rode away with the utmoſt ſpeed.

My ſudden flight immediately cauſed an univerſal hue and cry. "*A thief! A thief!*" exclaimed the whole multitude, who inſtantly purſued me with their utmoſt ſpeed. But I ſoon left them far behind me, panting for breath. Liberty once more promiſed to gladden my heart, when the ſwiftneſs of my flight was ſuddenly ſtopped by a dead wall. My purſuers gave a loud ſhout when they ſaw me thus a-ground; and I had given over every hope of eſcaping, when a thought ſtruck me that the wall might be the city wall, and that perhaps I might obtain my liberty through a window of one of the houſes at the bottom of the ſtreet. The door of that on the left ſide was open. I inſtantly jumped from my horſe, and entered it with a piſtol in each hand. I bolted the ſtreet door after me, and had the good fortune of getting up ſtairs unperceived by any of its inhabitants. My purſuers were cloſe after me; and thundered at the outer door at the very moment I was ruſhing into the room, where nobody was but an old woman. Seeing a man with a brace of piſtols, terror ſeized her, and ſhe fell into a ſwoon. I opened the window; and the joy I felt is inexpreſſible, when the open field met my anxious eye. I bolted the door, threw the bed out of the window, placed chairs and tables againſt it, and concealed myſelf in the chimney, there to wait the approach of night. This I accompliſhed in a few moments; and I was ſafely ſecured in my hiding place when the door was forced open with a thundering noiſe. My purſuers ſeeing the window open, and the feather-bed lying in the field, had not the leaſt doubt of my having effected an eſcape. Some young men jumped boldly down, and others went on horſeback to look after me. The old woman, who could tell no tales, was carried to another part of the houſe, and I was left alone to my private meditations.

Soon after, the owner of the houſe came into the room, with ſome of his neighbours. Their diſcourſe

assured me that nobody suspected my hiding place. After these unwelcome visitors had left me, and the tranquillity of the house in some degree restored, I climbed higher up into the chimney, with the intention to get upon the roof; but hearing many voices in the field, I thought it much safer to remain where I was. At length the feather-bed was brought back; but nobody came to sleep there that night; so that the room remained unoccupied.

As soon as midnight silence announced that everybody was gone to rest, I slided very softly down the chimney, tore one of the bed-sheets, and twisted it into a line, that it might let me down into the field. As soon as I had touched the ground, I immediately took to my heels, resolving, if possible, to reach before daybreak the *Black Forest*, which I knew was only two miles distant. Fatigued, and almost entirely exhausted, I at last reached the skirts of it; and threw myself into the first thicket, to rest my weary limbs.

Tired by the length of the journey, and harrassed with anxiety and fear, I fell asleep. I had not slept above two hours (as near as I could guess by the sun), when I was suddenly roused by the distant barking of dogs. I started up, and listened; when the hallooing of two huntsmen thundered in my ear. They seemed to be directing their course to the spot where I lay; and no other means of escape presented themselves, than to climb up into an adjoining oak-tree, and hide myself amid its thickest branches. Here all my fears increased with redoubled force, when the dogs came to this very tree, and began barking in a terrible manner. The hunters were close at their heels; but seeing no game, they called the dogs off, and pursued their way. Fearful of being once more in danger, I determined to wait where I was, till night should cover my flight.

I had hardly strength to hold out, having had no food for upward of two days; when I fortunately espied the nest of a raven with six eggs in it. This added new life to me; and when night set in, I got down, pursuing my way through the forest.

The night was dark, and a riſing tempeſt ſhook the tops of the lofty oaks. The diſtant lightning, and the hollow voice of the thunder, beſpoke a terrible night. The thunder ſoon began to ſhake the firmament; flaſhes of lightning illuminated, by intervals, the dark and dreary foreſt; and a ſtorm of rain guſhed down with the moſt violent impetuoſity. I ſought ſhelter beneath an antient oak; but, alas! a flaſh of lightning, which ſhivered to atoms a lofty beach-tree not above fifty paces from the ſpot where I was ſtanding, made me ſoon quit my dangerous ſituation; and drove me to an open ſpot, where I was expoſed to all the violence of the ſtorm. I was ſoon wet to the ſkin; my teeth began to chatter; and I felt myſelf moſt dreadfully frightened.

I had ſtood the fury of the elements two dreadful hours. No ſound was heard but the ſcreech of the owl, the roaring of thunder, and the howling of furious winds. Midnight was paſt; and the hurricane ſtill raged as violent as ever. My wounded conſcience recalled to my recollection all my paſt crimes. My tortured ſoul ſuggeſted a thouſand horrid thoughts; and I fervently vowed never more to deviate from the paths of virtue.

My whole frame ſhaking with cold, I began to run without knowing which courſe I took, merely to warm my blood, when all on a ſudden the ground gave way, and I fell into a deep pit. Though my fall was violent, I received no other hurt than a few bruiſes, my coat having got entangled in the roots of a tree about four yards from the bottom of my ſubterraneous dungeon. I endeavoured to climb up the wall, which appeared to be horizontal; but the attempt was vain. I ſat down upon the damp ground in a melancholy mood; when a ſudden flaſh of vivid lightning illuminated my priſon, and diſcloſed to my view a narrow paſſage. I groped along this winding paſſage with fearful ſteps, not knowing whether it would lead me upward or downward. I had walked above half an hour, and had not yet met with any outlet. I began

to deſpair of ever being able to extricate myſelf from my ſubterraneous dungeon, when a maſſy iron door ſuddenly obſtructed my way. I exerted what little ſtrength I had left to force it open; but the impenetrable darkneſs which ſurrounded me, rendered all my labours of no avail. At length a thought ſtruck me, that perhaps the flaſh of the powder would diſcover an outlet, if I was to fire a piſtol. I immediately took one from my pocket, and diſcharged it. The light occaſioned by my firing ſhowed me another paſſage to the left, which I inſtantly purſued; and ſoon came to a ſecond door, which ſhortly yielded to my efforts, and let me into a ſpacious vault.

Having groped about half an hour longer, I diſcovered a narrow ſtair-caſe, which led me into a roomy hall, dimly illuminated by the rays of the moon, then peeping through the loſty windows, which were compoſed of ſtained glaſs."

Here the robber gave a full deſcription of the haunted caſtle in the *Black Foreſt*, and then reſumed his narrative, as follows:

"Having explored every corner of this antient fabric, without meeting a human being, I deſcended into a ſpacious court-yard, from whence a lofty gate-way let me into the open field. The dawn of morn began to break in the eaſt from the purple clouds, and I heard the crowing of cocks at a very ſhort diſtance.

Quickening my tottering ſteps, I ſaw two country wenches, each with a baſket on her head, coming from the adjacent village, which appeared to be about a quarter of a mile off. I was on the point of aſking them the name of it, when both of them raiſed a dreadful ſcream, and ran back with the utmoſt ſpeed. Wiſhing to know, before I entered the village, where I was, leſt I ſhould unknowingly run into the hands of my purſuers, I ran after them as faſt as my ſtrength, almoſt exhauſted with hunger, would permit me; but when theſe frightened girls perceived me cloſe at their heels, they threw down their baſkets, and redoubled their ſpeed.

Fearful of being known, and apprehending that the wenches would alarm the village, I was obliged to give over my purſuit, and to ſeek a hiding place, 'till I ſhould be able to purſue my journey. No place promiſing a ſafer aſylum than the deſolated caſtle, I reſolved to return; but firſt determined to examine the baſkets the girls had dropped, in hopes of finding ſome victuals to appeaſe the pinching hunger which now tormented me. Their baſkets contained ſome lumps of butter, two earthen jars filled with milk, ſome ſmall cheeſes, and two large pieces of coarſe bread; which I imagine they had been carrying to market. The milk, which was not all run out of the earthen veſſels, quenched my thirſt; and the bread and cheeſe, with the butter, I carried to the caſtle. On my arrival in the great hall, I ſtruck fire with the help of a ſteel I had in my pocket, and the flint of one of my piſtols; and ſoon was ſeated by the burning flame, drying my wet garments, and appeaſing my hunger. Looking at my hands, I perceived them as black as thoſe of a coal-heaver, from the ſoot of the chimney where I had firſt ſheltered myſelf when I rode away from the gate-keeper; and imagining my face muſt be of the ſame colour, I was noways ſurpriſed at the ſudden flight of the two girls, who, in all probability, took me for the devil. This idea removed all fears of a viſit from the alarmed villagers; and the ſoothing hand of ſleep began to cloſe my eyes."

Thus far had the captain of the robbers related his extraordinary ſtory; when the chief juſtice commending the apparent ſincerity of his voluntary confeſſion, broke up the court; having remanded the priſoner to his dungeon 'till the following day; when he would hear, he ſaid, the continuation of his adventures.

The next day, the court having aſſembled in the uſual form, the priſoner was again brought to the bar; when he continued his ſingular adventures, from his reluctant return to the caſtle, where he intended to ſtay till the darkneſs of night ſhould ſhelter him from the purſuit of his perſecutors. The great fatigue he

had ſuſtained having cloſed his weary eyes, he ſlept 'till after ſun-ſet; when he left the caſtle, to purſue his way to F—, where he intended to enliſt in the *Pruſſian* ſervice. Having ſlightly mentioned theſe particulars, he proceeded as follows:

"Directed by the light of the moon, I ſoon found my way to the high road. The firſt well I came to, I cleaned my ſooty hands and face, and then went briſkly on. Being amply ſupplied with proviſions, I determined not to enter any inhabited place before neceſſity ſhould compel me, leſt ſome new misfortunes might counteract my military ſchemes. With this view, I left the high road whenever it led through a village, walked all the night, and ſlept in the day-time. I travelled in this manner two days and nights, without meeting any accident; but at the cloſe of the third day, I was obliged to direct my courſe to a ſmall hamlet, in order to procure ſome proviſions. As ſoon as it was dark, I went with fearful ſteps to a baker's ſhop, to purchaſe ſome bread; but gueſs my terror, when I wanted to pay for a ſmall coarſe loaf of bread I had bought, and could not find my purſe. I imagine it muſt have dropped out of my pocket when I dried my garments in the hall of the deſolated caſtle.

Being entirely deſtitute of money, I offered one of my piſtols, which I took out of my pocket, in lieu of payment. The baker viewed me all over; and after ſome heſitation, agreed to the bargain. Unfortunately, this man's houſe had been robbed ſome weeks ago by a gang of thieves; and my ſavage look and ſingular appearance rendered me ſuſpicious to the baker, who ever ſince took every ill-looking ſtranger for a thief.

Poſſeſſed with this idea, he ordered ſome of his people to follow me at a little diſtance, and went immediately to the bailiff, to inform him of his ſuſpicions, and to acquaint him with the ſtrange ſubſtitute he accepted for money.

This magiſtrate, who had been very active in his endeavours to diſcover the daring robbers, but hitherto without ſucceſs, immediately concluded I was one of

the gang; he therefore ordered ſome ſtout fellows to follow me, and ſecure me by ſurpriſe.

In the mean while I had ſtruck again into the foreſt, and had ſeated myſelf behind ſome buſhes by the banks of a rivulet. I was juſt beginning to ſatisfy the demands of hunger, not obſerving that I was followed, when ſuddenly four ſinewy arms ſeized me from behind.

I was immediately carried before the magiſtrate of the hamlet, who demanded my paſſport. Having been obliged to leave it behind, as I mentioned yeſterday, when I rode away from the gate-keeper, I had no alternative but of pretending to be an *Auſtrian* deſerter, who wanted to go into the *Pruſſian* ſervice. Miſtruſting my veracity, the magiſtrate ordered me to be ſearched; when a loaded piſtol and a large knife being found upon me, he, without any further ceremony, ſent me to priſon.

Apprehenſions of the moſt dreadful nature now aſſailed my unhappy ſoul. The fear that all my former crimes would be detected, filled me with the blackeſt deſpair. However, my lamentable ſituation took a turn more favourable than I could have expected. A tranſport of *Pruſſian* recruits paſſing through the village, the bailiff ordered me to be delivered to the commanding officer; thinking, perhaps, this was the eaſieſt way of ridding the country of a man who had, he thought, the marks of a thieviſh diſpoſition, and at the ſame time ſave himſelf the trouble of a tedious examination. My ſize, and the robuſt make of my limbs, rendered me a very acceptable acquiſition to the commanding officer; and I was enrolled as a *Pruſſian* ſoldier, to my inexpreſſible joy.

Thus, from a robber, was I at once appointed to fight the battles of *Frederic* the Great; and I made a ſolemn vow cheerfully to fulfil the duties of my honourable calling.

Our tranſport arrived ſafe at *Magdeburgh*, where, with the reſt of my companions, I was inſtructed in the art of war. The corporal, who was appointed to teach me the manual exerciſe, was famous for his ſe-

verity, and thought no method ſo likely to inſpire ſoldiers with heroiſm as the frequent application of wooden arguments.

I exerted myſelf to the utmoſt to pleaſe this rigorous fellow, and to ſhelter myſelf againſt the frequent repetitions of his blows and cuffs. But not being able to accompliſh my object, reſentment and hatred took poſſeſſion of my heart. My whole ſtock of patience was exhauſted; and I began to give way to drinking, to drown the recollection of my forlorn and unhappy ſituation.

Coming one day half intoxicated to the parade, I acquitted myſelf ſo badly, that my military mentor plied my back moſt unmercifully. My anger was rouſed, and I called him a ſavage beaſt, a blood-hound, and many other names of the ſame deſcription. This irritated him to ſuch a degree, that he inflicted his blows with ſtill greater violence. Forgetting for the moment every conſideration but that of revenge, in a fit of deſpair I ſtruck him to the ground with the butt end of my gun. I was inſtantly ſeized, carried to the military priſon, and condemned by a court-martial to run the gauntlet.

The day of execution arrived; the ſoldiers were drawn up; and my back was bared; when, lo! the mark of my ignominy preſently appeared. It being evident by the mark of a gallows, which was placed between my ſhoulders the third time I had been apprehended for game-ſtealing, that I had been under the hands of the common hangman, I was deemed unworthy to receive military puniſhment, and was ſentenced to work in the fortification.

Confined with the dregs of human kind, and ever in company with the baſeſt of villains, my virtuous reſolutions gradually began to wear away. I once more thought I was doomed to be a villain; and driven to deſpair by hard labour, and frequent blows, I concerted plans for effecting my eſcape.

One of my fellow-priſoners, a moſt conſummate ruffian, joined with me in the means of regaining our

liberty. After many fruitleſs efforts, we effected our eſcape, through an impenetrable fog, which covered our flight. As ſoon as we were miſſed from the fortreſs, the cannons were fired, and the country rouſed. However, we fortunately eluded our purſuers; and at the cloſe of day reached a wood, where we reſolved to conceal ourſelves in the tops of the trees, till the heat of the purſuit ſhould be abated.

In this uncomfortable ſituation we remained as long as our ſmall ſtock of proviſion laſted, often debating what means we ſhould employ as the likelieſt to procure us an independent livelihood. At laſt, we agreed to repair to the haunted caſtle in the *Black Foreſt*, and there commence robbers.

I hit upon a ſcheme to render that deſolated fabric more ſecure againſt the intruſion of unwelcome viſitors, by raiſing an idea among the neighbouring villagers, of its being haunted by evil ſpirits. In order to accompliſh our deſign, we ſet up a dreadful howling, and made the moſt doleful lamentations, whenever we perceived any of them near the environs of the caſtle. The gloomy appearance of that half-decayed fabric, joined to the ſuperſtition of the credulous peaſantry, rendered our ſchemes ſucceſsful; and in a ſhort time, none of the villagers dared to approach our lurking place; from which we ſallied out every night diſguiſed in the ſkins of goats, which we had ſtolen, and committed numberleſs robberies in the village. Having procured a ſufficient ſtock of money, I diſpatched my aſſociate to a neighbouring town to procure fire-arms, powder, and ball; and then we began to prey on the unwary wanderer. To relate the numerous robberies we committed, before we were joined by new aſſociates, would fill many volumes. As our numbers increaſed, we became more daring, and extended our depredations many miles over the country; 'till after a ſeries of thirty ſucceſsful years, our infernal ſociety ſuſtained a deadly blow by the nocturnal ſurpriſe which delivered us into the hands of puniſhing juſtice.

Thus, my lord, and gentlemen, I have related the

leading particulars of my unhappy life. I have not wilfully omitted any circumſtance. I throw myſelf entirely on your mercy; and whatever ſentence you may deem proper to inflict, I ſhall cheerfully, and with reſignation, ſubmit to it."

The court then ordered him from the bar; and agreed to take time for conſidering his ſentence. He has ſince confeſſed, that they have a great number of hiding places beſide the ſolitary caſtle; and that their gang conſiſts of fifty-three ruffians, who are diſperſed all over the country. The uſeful information he has given to his judges, has enabled them to ſecure a great number of innkeepers and publicans who were leagued with that infernal ſet; but the money, and the great booty they are ſuppoſed to have hoarded up, has never been diſcovered. It is imagined to have been removed on the firſt alarm, by the reſt of the gang.

WOLFE's life will be ſpared, on account of his faithful confeſſion, and the great aſſiſtance he has afforded his judges in putting a final ſtop to the depredations which have been committed for a ſeries of years in the environs of the *Black Foreſt*. He is to be committed for life to the houſe of correction, where he will have ſufficient leiſure to reflect on his paſt life, and to prepare to meet that eternal judge, who ſooner or later overtakes the wicked in their vile purſuits.

THE

WANDERING FUGITIVE.

THE morning had juſt dawned, when Frederic Winſon, having packed up a few neceſſaries in a handkerchief, haſtened down the ſtair-caſe of his patron with a heavy heart; and having left a manuſcript of his memoirs on the deſk in the compting-houſe, attained the ſtreet door; and pulling it after him, took a farewell view of the manſion of the benevolent Mr. James Tradewell. Then darting acroſs the oppoſite ſtreet, was out of ſight in a moment—an extraordinary example of the endleſs torments which a wounded conſcience inflicts on its poſſeſſors.

Soon after, Mr. Tradewell, who, overwhelmed with ſorrow for the intended departure of his favourite clerk, had paſſed a ſleepleſs night, entered the compting-houſe; and as ſoon as he ſaw the manuſcript, he broke it open, and read as follows:

MEMOIRS OF A FUGITIVE.

"My father Mr. Thomas Winſon was a perſon of reſpectability in the north of England, who married a woman ſomewhat older than himſelf, merely becauſe ſhe had large expectations from a relation in the Eaſt Indies; but ſoon after their marriage, news arrived of the loſs of the frigate on board which this relation had embarked on his return to England; when the cargo and the whole of the ſhip's crew went to the bottom, and every ſoul on board periſhed.

From this moment my father's temper grew very unhappy. Diſappointed of the views he had drawn to himſelf of increaſing the already ſufficient wealth of his family, his ſole pride became centered in oppreſſing the poor, and ſpreading devaſtation among the cottages of thoſe who offended him, with the deſpotic cruelty of an Indian nabob.

Such was the character and compoſition of the author of my being; and thus taught to yield an implicit obedience from my firſt moments of recollection, it would naturally be expected that I ſhould have retaliated on thoſe below me; but the natural bent of my diſpoſition recoiled at the leaſt idea of cruelty or injuſtice.

The early part of my life was paſſed with a ſquire, who had honoured Mr. Winſon by ſtanding as my godfather; and therefore took the care of my education upon himſelf. He was a profeſſed foxhunter, a freethinker, and a lover of the fair ſex; to which latter paſſion he daily ſacrificed the deareſt intereſts of ſuch of his dependants who durſt make the leaſt oppoſition to his will.

My education was committed to the charge of his curate; who was a man of ſound ſenſe and learning; but, as is moſt commonly the caſe in the clerical department, was a mere drudge to one, who, though his ſuperior, and poſſeſſed of a living of two hundred a year, was conſiderably inferior to him in point of mental qualifications.

With this man my time paſſed on in the moſt agreeable manner; and I muſt own that it was conſiderably heightened by the modeſt behaviour of the fair Emma, whoſe ſole ſtudy was to render everything as pleaſant to me as poſſible; and this reciprocal attachment, though it could then only bear the name of friendſhip, ſoon ripened, as we grew up to years of maturity, into the more tender one of love. I knew my father would entertain higher views for me; but as I had a hundred a year, which I could call my own, as it was left me by my grandfather, as ſoon as I came of age, I determined to indulge my paſſion; and, if my father proved refractory, to take a ſmall farm, and ſeek in the ruſtic life that happineſs which it was more than probable I ſhould be denied in my preſent ſtation.

Impreſſed with theſe ideas, I daily watched for an opportunity, and at length found one, to declare my paſſion; which, I need not add, was received with a mixture of confuſion and delight by the lovely maid; but ſhe would not conſent to be mine till I came of age.

My father ſoon after this occurrence ſent for me, and received me with a certain degree of affability that ſerved

to convince me he had ſomething to propoſe, highly advantageous to the deſigns he had formed of aggrandizing his family; nor was I deceived in my conjecture; for, without any previous introduction, he informed me that he had choſen a young lady, who was the daughter of a neighbouring ſquire, of an extenſive fortune, as a wife for me; and added, that he hoped, by this union, to hand his name down to poſterity with an additional degree of grandeur.

I received this intelligence with the utmoſt ſurpriſe; and as my ſoul was poſſeſſed with the image of my Emma, ventured, without conſideration, to declare my pre-engagement; but I ſoon paid dearly for my raſh avowal; for my father, rouſed into indignation at my inſolent and ungrateful behaviour, ordered me to cloſe confinement, 'till I ſhould become ſenſible of that duty which is due from a ſon to his father; adding, that if I remained obdurate, the whole of the Meanwell family, and my charming Emma (whom he was pleaſed to call a beggar's brat), as they lived upon his eſtate, ſhould pay dearly for my obſtinacy.

I was no ſooner left alone in the apartment which was allotted to be my priſon, than I gave way to the moſt melancholy reflections upon the evil effects produced on ſociety by a too firm adherence to the principles of family pride, and the love of money, in which my father ſeemed to center all his ideas of happineſs; and throwing myſelf on a couch, paſſed the night in a ſtate of ſleepleſs anxiety.

In this manner was I kept confined nearly two years; during which time my father continually viſited me; and on finding me ſtill remain inflexible, renewed his threats, at every interview, of working the total deſtruction of the Meanwell family; which he well knew was dearer to me than my life.

Enraged at his behaviour, and my boſom torn with continual fears for their ſafety, I made ſeveral fruitleſs attempts to eſcape; upon which, my father had me conveyed into a room which he had barricadoed for the purpoſe; where I dragged on another twelvemonth's captivity, hourly tormented with the unfeeling taunts of my remorſeleſs father, and the moſt dreadful apprehenſions for the ſafety of my dear Emma and her innocent rela-

tions. At length I contrived, during one of the moſt tempeſtuous nights that was ever witneſſed in this part of the globe, by tying together the blankets and ſheets, which ſerved to cover me, to let myſelf down into the garden; when the fear of my being retaken added wings to my feet, and I reached the bottom of the garden, which was of no ſmall extent, in a moment; and, with an agility which my earneſt deſire to eſcape inſpired me with, attained the ſummit of the wall, although it was exceedingly lofty; and dropping from it, reached the ground on the other ſide in perfect ſafety.

My firſt buſineſs now was to fly to the manſion which contained my all, my adored Emma; but, judge my ſurpriſe when I found, on my arrival at this once happy ſpot, that it was occupied by another family, who could give me no intelligence of the dear object of my inquiry. I turned from the door, without knowing whither to bend my ſteps; till recollecting my old nurſe, I flew to her as the moſt likely perſon to inform me, ſhe being the general intelligencer of the pariſh. The good old woman received me with ſurpriſe; and from her I learned, that my father and the ſquire, under the feint of purſuing their favourite ſport the chace, had often cauſed the game to paſs through the grounds belonging to Meanwell, in order to bring about the ruin of that unhappy family, out of revenge for their ill-fated attachment to me; the conſequence of which was, that the worthy curate being rendered unable, through this unexampled cruelty of his oppreſſors, to pay his rent, the whole of his effects were ſeized on to make up the deficiency, and this unhappy family turned out into the wide world without a friend or a home to ſhelter them from the inclemency of the weather. Diſtracted at this horrid relation, which would have made the moſt ſavage Indian ſhudder, I eagerly inquired if ſhe knew in what part of the country they had fixed their reſidence. To this ſhe replied in the affirmative; adding, that the old gentleman, having been ſo fortunate as to ſave his books from the general wreck, had retired, with his family, to a ſmall village in the adjoining county; where having ſet up a ſchool, this, together with the joint endeavours of his wife and daugh-

ter, who ſhe ſaid takes in needle-work, enables them to obtain a ſcanty maintenance.

Shocked at the mournful picture of this once happy family, I took leave of my good old nurſe; and reſolving to find out the only perſon who could make me happy in this life, ſet out by all the bye-roads, in order to prevent diſcovery, on my journey to the place that was ſaid to afford an aſylum for the wretched victim of oppreſſive greatneſs.

At length, night overtaking me when I had got about half way to the end of my journey, I was obliged, though rather reluctantly, to requeſt a night's lodging under the humble roof of a poor peaſant who dwelt on the road ſide; where, after partaking of their frugal repaſt, which was ſet before me with a moſt hearty welcome, I retired to ſhare with them, as they thought, the tranſcendant bleſſings of a calm repoſe; but, alas! ſleep was a ſtranger to my eyes; and, after a night ſpent in planning out my future deſigns in life on my union with Emma, which I was now determined to ſee accompliſhed as ſoon as I had found her, I aroſe with the ſun; and, after returning thanks to my kind hoſts for their hoſpitality, reaſſumed my journey, and arrived in ſafety at the village; where, after many fruitleſs inquiries, I at length ſucceeded in finding out the abode of the dear and only object of my affection.

I approached it with caution; but not without heaving a ſigh while I made a mournful compariſon between their preſent humble and depreſſed ſituation and the one which, through their unfortunate acquaintance with me, they had loſt; and knocking ſoftly at the door, the firſt object which preſented itſelf was the gentle Emma, who had no ſooner opened it, than, perceiving who it was, ſhe gave a faint ſcream; and ſtaggering back a few paces, fell into the arms of her mother. The whole family were both pleaſed and aſtoniſhed to ſee me; and as ſoon as my charmer was recovered, entreated me to inform them in what manner I had made my eſcape, and of the reſt of my adventures; which I readily complied with; and, in return, made a ſimilar requeſt of theirs.

From them I learned, that my godfather ſquire Robuſt, during one of his cruel expeditions through their

grounds, had obtained a view of my lovely maid; from which moment he determined to obtain poſſeſſion of her at any rate but the fooliſh one, as he termed it, of matrimony; and that, when by the ſavage manœuvres of himſelf and my cruel parent they had brought Mr. Meanwell to a ſtate of inſolvency, the ſquire (who no doubt was urged to it by my father, who flattered himſelf that an event of this kind would cure me of my ill-placed paſſion, as he termed it), called on Mr. Meanwell; and, under the maſk of pretended friendſhip and pity for his diſtreſs, made ſuch propoſals which, though thought nothing of by the faſhionable world, cauſed the good old curate to ſhudder; whilſt he, in a firm and reſolute manner, refuſed his offers; and braving the utmoſt of his malice, ventured to declare that the deviation of his child from the path of virtue ſhould never releaſe him from the preſent embarraſſment he laboured under. Upon this the ſquire retired, very much diſpleaſed with his reception; and the next day they were turned out, as my nurſe had informed me; when, in order to avoid the evil deſigns of the brutal ſquire, they retired to the humble roof beneath which I found them; where they had maintained themſelves by their induſtry ever ſince.

The account which they had juſt given me of the evil deſigns of my godfather filled my boſom with the moſt deadly averſion for him, and the moſt painful apprehenſions for the ſafety of one on whom I depended alone for exiſtence. Impreſſed with theſe ideas, I fell on my knees before Emma and her parents; nor could all their endeavours raiſe me from them, 'till I had obtained their conſent that the next morning ſhould ſecure her mine, and give me a lawful right to become the protector of her innocence and beauty againſt all the attempts of that proud and licentious monſter the ſquire, and his agents.

The morning came; and having procured a licence, I was united by her father to the timid and trembling Emma, whoſe beautiful appearance was rendered, if poſſible, more lovely by the crimſoned bluſh of modeſt innocence which overſpread her cheeks on this occaſion; and we loſt all remembrance of the paſt in the preſent ſcene of happineſs before us; but, alas! a few days after we were alarmed at an unuſual knocking which we heard at

the door; when, on Mrs. Meanwell's opening it, two ill-looking fellows ruſhed in, and tapped me on the ſhoulder; adding, that I was their priſoner, and muſt go along with them.

I was ſo much amazed at this unexpected circumſtance, that for ſome time I wanted the power to aſk at whoſe ſuit; and you may eaſily conceive my ſurpriſe, when, on my putting the queſtion to them, they anſwered, at the ſuit of ſquire Robuſt, for the ſum of five hundred pounds due for board, lodging, and education. I ſoon ſaw through this pretended arreſt, and therefore commiſſioned my father-in-law to ſell my little eſtate, in order to enable me to diſcharge the debt; and then tearing myſelf from my diſtracted wife, and her no leſs afflicted parents, ſurrendered my perſon to the cuſtody of the two bailiffs, who conveyed me from thence to the debtors ſide of the county gaol, totally inſenſible of the affecting ſcene that had juſt paſſed before them.

In the courſe of the afternoon of the next day, Mr. Meanwell entered my cell; and, with a ſmile on his countenance, informed me that he had diſpoſed of my eſtate according to my deſire, and diſcharged the debt; adding, with a fervent ejaculation to the divine diſpoſer of all things, that I was once more at liberty, in ſpite of the evil machinations of our enemies. Overjoyed at this pleaſing intelligence, I embraced the good man with rapture, and eagerly inquired after the health of my ſweet Emma and her mother; when I received the delightful aſſurance that there was nothing wanting on their parts but my preſence to make them completely happy.

We immediately deſcended from the gloomy dungeon which had ſo lately ſeparated me from all I held dear; and, after we had diſcharged the fees, ſet out with cheerful hearts for the hoſpitable manſion of my father-in-law; amuſing ourſelves with deſcribing the joy that would break forth from the lips of our reſpective partners on our arrival; but, alas! a more melancholy reception was prepared for us; for we had no ſooner entered the cottage than our ears were aſſailed with a loud ſcream, and an exclamation of terror, from Mrs. Meanwell; who haſtily demanded if we had ſeen Emma. An uncommon coldneſs ſeized my heart on hearing this

queſtion, as I but too well gueſſed the real cauſe of her abſence.

When we were become more calm, we found that an ill-favoured man had delivered a meſſage to her from me, ſtating that I was taken violently ill, and requeſted her immediately to come to me; and that ſhe had unexpectedly followed him; when undoubtedly ſhe muſt have fallen into the power of the brutal ſquire.

Enraged at this idea, I flew out of the houſe, accompanied by Mr. Meanwell; when having hired a couple of horſes, we ſet out in purſuit of the raviſher, but were forced to return, after three days fruitleſs inquiry.

Diſtraction (the natural conſequence of the uncertainty I laboured under in regard to the fate of my injured wife) ſeized on my brain; and for three months I became inſenſible to all around me. On my recovery, I found a freſh addition to my grief in the declining health of Mr. and Mrs. Meanwell, who ſoon after fell a ſacrifice to their anxiety for the fate of their daughter.

I followed them to the grave, although I was rendered ſo extremely weak by my late illneſs that I was obliged to be led to and from the mournful ceremony; but an event happened ſoon after, which inſpired me with freſh ſtrength and vigour; it was a letter from my beloved Emma; in which ſhe informed me, that having been drawn into the power of ſquire Robuſt, he had found means to adminiſter a ſleeping potion to her; and taking advantage of her helpleſs ſituation, had rendered her unworthy of being called mine any longer; concluding with the moſt fervent prayers for my ſafety.

Unable to bear the agitation of my mind, I fell back in my chair, and remained for ſome time in a ſtate of inſenſibility; when on my recovery I found that the only paſſion left alive in my breaſt was that of revenge. I looked upon the law which allows a woman to work the death of her raviſher, to extend to me, becauſe the marriage ſtate had made me and Emma as one, and immediately left the houſe with the reſolution of revenging myſelf on the vile deſtroyer of my happineſs.

Having procured a diſguiſe, I ſet out for the ſquire's houſe, big with the vengeance I intended to let fall on his devoted head; and on my arrival there, took the ad-

vantage of the night, which was juſt ſet in, to overleap the garden wall. This done, I intended to have concealed myſelf in the ſummer-houſe; when, on opening the door, I perceived the cruel monſter ſeated, with a piſtol laying on the table before him, reading letters. I recoiled back with horror at this unexpected meeting. Then maddening with rage as the image of the polluted Emma ruſhed into my mind, I preſented myſelf before him; and, with a diſtracted ſhout of exultation, told the author of my miſery he was in my power, and demanded the immediate reſtoration of my injured wife; or my arm ſhould avenge her cauſe on the baſe deſpoiler.

The ſquire having by this time recovered from the ſurpriſe my ſudden appearance had thrown him into, commanded me to be gone; adding, that he knew nothing about Emma. Then finding that I ſtill maintained the poſition of defiance which I had thrown myſelf into on my firſt addreſſing him, fired his piſtol full in my face; but, aware of his deſign, I glided on one ſide; by which means I eſcaped unhurt; and then drawing forth a piſtol, which I had till then kept concealed under my diſguiſe, returned his fire immediately; which I had no ſooner done than he fell, exclaiming he was murdered. The very ſound thrilled through my every vein; and, like the arch-murderer Cain, I became affrighted at my own ſhadow; while murder ſeemed to be wrote in crimſon letters wherever I turned my diſtracted eyes.

A noiſe in the garden however rouſed me from my ſtupor; and I, who before could have braved the world in arms, now fled with all the terrors of a guilty coward, and eſcaped in the ſame manner as I had attained admittance to this fatal place.

My ſole thoughts were now bent on flying to as great a diſtance as poſſible from this horrid ſcene; but, alas! I could not fly from the ſtern upbraidings of my inward monitor, who, at the ſame time as it preſented the image of the ſquire to my view weltering in his gore, kept whiſpering in my ear, "thou art a murderer!"

I concealed myſelf during the day in the thicket and other ſequeſtered parts of the country, taking care firſt to bury my waiſtcoat, which was ſtained with the blood of my oppreſſor; then cutting a ſtout ſtick for defence,

renewed my flight by night, taking care always to lay close in the day-time, living for some time on the berries and such wild fruits as the hedges and woods afforded me, frequently exclaiming, "O God! thou art just. It is fitting that the wretch who dareſt to shed the blood of his brother should become the outcast of society."

At length, become more bold by the distance I had travelled, I ventured to knock at the door of a cottage I came to about midnight, and was answered by a voice within, who asked my business; upon which, in order to account for my shabby appearance, I told them that I came from a distant village; and having been robbed and benighted, craved an asylum till the morning. The same voice gave a surly denial to my request; but on hearing that I had still a trifle left, the cottager ventured to open the door. A cheerful blaze was made with a few faggots on the hearth, and a scanty repast set before me; during which I made a bargain with him for an old suit of his clothes; having, while I was imploring admittance, taken care to throw my coat into an adjacent ditch.

Being now equipped in an old waggoner's frock, wooden shoes, &c. quite *à la paisan*, and sufficiently refreshed, I took my leave of my kind hosts, under the pretence of an ardent desire to gain as quick as possible the place of my destination; and after paying the whole of their demands, again set out on my journey; which, alas! was never to end but with the conclusion of my existence; but as the morning began to dawn, I struck into a bye-path, which ran parallel with the high road, and was situated by the side of a rapid river, where I thought, as it was shaded by a long row of lofty trees and a quick-set hedge, I might pass on without observation. I had scarcely reached this place, when I heard the voice of people behind me on the main road, as in high discourse. I crept on slowly, in order to overhear the subject of it; when judge my surprise, on finding it an advertisement, offering for Frederic Winson a reward of one thousand pounds, as the murderer of squire Robust; upon which, knowing myself to be the person, and my guilty conscience staring me in my face with accumulated horror, I, without knowing what I did, gave a loud and fearful

groan; which at firſt alarmed the countrymen; but concluding it to proceed from ſome poor creature in diſtreſs, they reſolved to turn into the bye-road to offer their aſſiſtance. Fearful of diſcovery, I immediately plunged into the water and concealed myſelf among the ruſhes and ſedges which grew plentifully about the borders of the river, but not ſo quickly, as to prevent their having a glimpſe of me; which cauſed them to exclaim with one accord, that I was the very man they were talking of, and that the thouſand pounds would ſoon be theirs.

Upon hearing this, I pulled off my frock; and having previouſly tied up ſome ſtones in my handkerchief, I flung them both into the water; when the countrymen hearing the daſh, and ſeeing the frock floating down the river, gave over their ſearch, and purſued their journey, venting a thouſand curſes on my raſhneſs, naturally enough concluding, that I had, in a fit of deſpair, put an end to my exiſtence, in order to avoid the certain puniſhment I ſhould be ſure to meet with, for a crime the moſt dreadful in all the catalogue of human ſins.

This narrow eſcape cauſed me to take up my abode for ſome time in one of the loftieſt trees I could ſelect in the row, from whence I never deſcended till night; in which time I ſubſiſted ſolely on the fiſh that I caught during my nocturnal hours of liberty. At length, grown tired of inactivity, and knowing that whilſt I remained in obſcurity, I ſhould never be able to gain any tidings of my long loſt Emma, for whoſe ſake alone I wiſhed to live, I reſolved to venture forth at all events, although my appearing in the ſame clothes the countrymen had ſeen me in, I was ſenſible might lead to a diſcovery; accordingly I deſcended the tree, and was about to renew my journey, when I was alarmed by the ſound of footſteps behind me; and turning round, ſaw a poor fiſherman landing from his boat with a baſket of fiſh which he had juſt caught. Alarmed at his preſence, I reſolved to ſecure him, for two reaſons; the one was, leſt on his return he ſhould, as I was fearful he had read the advertiſement, recogniſe my perſon, and raiſe the country on me; and another was, that by an exchange of clothes I might eſcape detection for ſome time longer; and therefore ad-

vancing toward him, brandiſhed my ſtick in a furious manner, commanding him to ſurrender; this, as I was much ſtronger and bigger than himſelf, he readily complied with; and, after we had made an exchange, ſubmitted to be bound hand and foot, without offering to make the leaſt reſiſtance; which done, I bundled him into the boat, along with his fiſh; and getting into it myſelf, rowed over to the other ſide; when after I had ſet him adrift, I proceeded on my journey, but not without my conſcience upbraiding me for the barbarity I had been guilty of.

From this time I travelled on in a continual ſtate of apprehenſion without meeting with anything particular, for a month, or better; when I arrived in a ſmall town quite late in the evening; where, as it happened to be a market-day, I found one of the ſhops open, which, as is very common in the country, dealt not only in the common neceſſaries of life, but ſecond-hand clothes alſo; where I bought ſome proviſions, and a ſuit of clothes; by which means I nearly expended the ſmall ſtock of money I had ſaved out of the wreck of my fortune. I had reſolved to ſleep in this town that night, and ſo to ſtart betimes in the morning; but while I was trying on my clothes, I perceived one of the ſhopmen, who was reading the paper, to obſerve me in a very curious manner, which to a guilty mind, like mine, was confirmation ſtrong that he had ſome knowledge of the murder; nor was I wrong in my opinion; for on taking up the paper, which he had juſt laid down in order to ſerve a cuſtomer, I ſaw the dreadful word in large letters at the top of an advertiſement; which, after giving an exact deſcription of my perſon, offered one thouſand pounds reward, payable on my apprehenſion by the executors of the ſquire.

In order to hide my confuſion, I pretended to be tying up my old clothes in an handkerchief; then paying them for what I had bought, made the beſt of my way out of the ſhop, and travelled on without ſtopping the whole of that night and beſt part of the enſuing morning; ſo dreadful is that terror which oppreſſes the mind of the guilty; when having arrived in the moſt gloomy part of Hornſey-wood, I ventured to ſit down, and take a little refreſhment; which done, I again ſet out on my ram-

bles, and in the evening found myſelf in London. Overcome with fatigue, I had ſat myſelf down on the ſtep of your door to reſt myſelf, when, cheered by the mild accents of pity to which you gave utterance, on finding me in that ſituation, I ventured once more to aſſociate with man; but Providence, who in its wiſdom has decreed that the murderer never ſhould know reſt, compels me again to become a Wandering Fugitive. Adieu! thou beſt of men. Judge me not with aſperity, but ſometimes heave a ſigh for my misfortunes, and depend on the remainder of my memoirs when death has put an end to the exiſtence of Frederic Winſon."

The good old merchant laid down the manuſcript; and while he ſhuddered at the dreadful effects of vindictive paſſion, dropped the tear of compaſſion over the misfortunes of his favourite; and two long months elapſed in a ſtate of uncertainty as to his future fate; when a meſſenger arrived with the promiſed memoirs; which Tradewell broke open with eagerneſs, impatient to know the fate of one whoſe ſufferings had made him the object of his pity. It began as follows:

"The door had cloſed after me; and I had no ſooner left your hoſpitable manſion, than I made the beſt of my way through the buſy ſcenes of London, where I found diſplayed, even on the faces of the moſt miſerable objects, a ſmile of content, to which I was condemned to be a ſtranger evermore. Every paper I ſaw poſted againſt the wall, I magnified into a deſcription of myſelf; and whenever I ſaw two people in converſation, I concluded they were talking of me. O! my worthy friend, ſuch were the continual torments of a wretch to whom you gave an aſylum; and ſeverely have I ſuffered for daring to draw the ſword of juſtice from the hands of him who alone has a right to puniſh the ſons of men for their enormities.

Unknowing where I went, I travelled on for ſeveral days, till I found myſelf on the borders of Epping Foreſt; where I narrowly eſcaped the obſervation of a couple of runners, who muſt have ſeen the confuſion I was in when they accoſted me, had they not been too eager in purſuit of an highwayman, for whom they expected to receive

fifty pounds; and for whom they had inquired of me, aſking if I had ſeen ſuch a perſon; and, on my giving them a negative anſwer in a country dialect, ſet off full drive, damning me for a country booby. Alarmed at this rencontre, I proceeded with more caution, and ſoon after meeting with a beggar, I prevailed on him for a trifle to change clothes with me, under the pretence of a frolic; and then wiſhing him a good day, I proceeded on my journey.

Grown faint by fatigue and the contending paſſions in my breaſt, I ventured to ſit down on a bench at the door of an hedge alehouſe; and, truſting to my diſguiſe, entered into diſcourſe with an old man, who, after joking me on the profits of my trade, informed me he was in purſuit of a fellow whom, by his deſcription, I found to be myſelf; adding, that he had been kept in pay ever ſince by my father, in order to apprehend me, it being his intention to bring me in inſane, and, by confining me for life, wipe away the ſlur I had thrown on my family; and then added, that he ſhould know his man, though he were in the ſhape of the devil himſelf. To this I replied, that I had ſeen ſuch a man in the great northern road; and having paid our reckonings, we parted each to purſue his journey, which, fortunately for me, lay widely different from each other.

I had not proceeded far before I found myſelf at the ſea-ſide; and was ſoon ſurrounded by a number of men, who, binding me hand and foot in ſpite of the deſperate reſiſtance I made, concluding them to be the officers of juſtice, put me into a tilted waggon, and ſet off as faſt as the horſes could gallop; while I lay in the poſture they had put me, picturing to myſelf the diſmal and terrific moment when, by the laws of my country, I was to make ample retribution for my infringement of them; which I was firmly convinced was near at hand.

At length we ſtopped at a ruinated building; which they had no ſooner reached, than they blindfolded me; and, by the number of our aſcendings and deſcendings,

I found that the place was very intricate; but judge my ſurpriſe when, on the bandage being taken from my eyes, I found myſelf in a large room, in which appeared great preparation for mirth and hilarity, and ſurrounded by about forty ſtout hardy looking fellows. Their chief ſeeing me alarmed, took me by the hand, and very courteouſly invited me to ſhare in their entertainments. To this I conſented; and ſoon found, by their diſcourſe, and the healths they drank, that I had fallen into the hands of ſmugglers, who always, as I found afterward, ſecured the unwary travellers who ſtumbled on their landing place, in order to prevent their giving information to the exciſe officers, whom theſe people look upon as their greateſt enemies.

The night was ſpent in a continued ſeries of revelry, obſcenity, and riot, till they fell one by one from the table, and took their reſidence, for the remainder of the evening, on the floor. The chief and I were the only two ſober people in the company; and after he had gone round to ſee that all was ſafe, we retired to our ſeveral apartments; where, overcome by the fumes of the wine, as I thought, I fell into a profound ſlumber, from whence I did not wake till the next morning; when, to my aſtoniſhment, I found myſelf laying at the foot of a ſtupendous rock; from which circumſtance I ſoon gueſſed at the cauſe of my drowſineſs the preceding evening, and conceived that I had been conveyed thither by the ſmugglers, in order to prevent my diſcovering their place of rendezvous. I remained for ſome time loſt in thought, on the ſingularity of my late adventure, when the ruſtling of the wind among the leaves put me in mind of my own ſafety; and concluding it to be ſome one who, having hid himſelf in the hedge, was ready to ruſh upon and ſeize me for the ſake of the reward, I fled with the greateſt precipitation, without once daring to look behind me.

Tired out with the long reſearches I had made after Emma, without any ſucceſs, I reſolved to proceed, after I had made a little alteration in my perſon, ſuch as having put my arm in a ſling, and applied a patch to

my eye, acroſs the country, to my father's, in order to demand from him the place of her retreat; when, after three days tedious journey, I arrived before the door of my father, but could not muſter courage ſufficient, before it was twilight, to knock at the door, and inquire if Mr. Winſon was within; which I had no ſooner done, than the ſervant haughtily replied he was, but had made a rule never to ſee any ſtrangers. At length I gained admittance with much difficulty, on aſſuring him I had ſomething of importance to communicate concerning his young maſter. I was then ſhown in (but not till I had been ſearched, in order to ſee if I had any offenſive weapon concealed; ſo greatly did my father dread that vengeance of which he was deſerving from any other hand but mine) into the room where my father was ſeated. Heavens! how altered his whole frame was! emaciated, and worn to a ſkeleton, by the reſtleſs nights of fearful anxiety he had ſpent ever ſince he had firſt deviated from the duty of a parent. I had no ſooner entered the room than, throwing off my diſguiſe, I demanded, in a ſtern tone, what he had done with Emma, my injured wife. He ſtarted back; then with a weak and trembling accent exclaimed, "Frederic! are you come to murder your father?"—"No, ſir," replied I, "Frederic Winſon, though drove to the greateſt deſperation, will never raiſe his hand againſt his father. No. Let me but know the fate of Emma. Let me embrace her once more within theſe arms, and then"---"Your Emma," interrupted my father with a malicious ſmile, "is now a common proſtitute." Madneſs ſeized my brain on this aſſurance; and gnaſhing my teeth, in the wildneſs of fury, I curſed the world, myſelf, and him, in the bittereſt manner. Then opening the door, I darted down the well-known ſtairs, and eſcaped out at the ſame door by which I entered.

Regardleſs of all around me, I fled on I knew not whither, till, worn out with fatigue, I fell down, deprived of motion, in the middle of the road; from which moment I was inſenſible to all around me for

better than a week; when, the fever and delirium abating, into which I had been thrown from the uncommon agitation of my mind, I found myſelf in a kind of ſhed, ſupported by pariſh bounty; and it being night, nothing diſturbed the general ſilence but the groans of the diſeaſed, which were occaſionally intermingled with the ſonorous tones of the ſnoring nurſes.

Loſt in reflection on my late adventure, and the fate of my beloved wife, I vented my grief in groans and in frequent repetitions of her name; when at laſt I was interrupted by a female in the next bed, who in a faint and frantic manner demanded who called on Emma. The ſound of her voice ſoon convinced me that it was no other than herſelf. I flew to her; and embracing her with the tendereſt emotions, endeavoured to ſooth her ſinking ſpirits, by aſſuring her that ſhe was as dear to me as ever; that ſhe was ſtill my wife; and that I lived for her alone; but, alas! the cold hand of death had marked her for his own; and ſhe only lived to inform me, that ſoon after the murder was committed, my father, pretending to pity her, took her from the houſe of the ſquire, and gave her a ſmall cottage to live in; but, alas! it was done with the blackeſt view that could ever enter the human breaſt; in ſhort, a villain, who had been hired for that purpoſe by my father, broke into the cottage, and once more made her the victim of brutal violence; then leaving her, contaminated with a diſeaſe that he knew would ſoon ſink a conſtitution already impaired to the ſilent grave, flew to receive the reward of his nefarious action; when the unfortunate Emma was conveyed to this place, there to end her days in infamy and ſhame.

Frantic at this freſh injury, I threw myſelf on the bed by the dear inanimate corſe of my departed angel; and for ſome time they were unable to tear me from it. Become more calm, I would not allow them to bury her in a ſhell; but gave up the little all I had, to buy her a coffin. At length the fatal day arrived that

was to ſeparate us for ever; and every ſtroke of the ſolemn tolling bell was as a dagger to my heart; and unable to attend, I permitted the ſolemn proceſſion to depart without me.

Having now nothing left to render the world dear to me, I determined to ſurrender myſelf the following morning, as an expiation of my crime, to the neareſt magiſtrate; and accordingly ſet out the next day to the houſe of the juſtice, who at firſt was very loth to credit my aſſertion; but upon my perſevering in the ſtory, was obliged to commit me to the county goal; whither I was immediately taken, amidſt an innumerable crowd of people, who were all eager to ſee the man of whom ſuch wonders had been related.

The day of trial came; and the court was crowded at an early hour; when, on the indictment being read, and the queſtion of guilty or not guilty aſked, I replied, in a firm tone, "guilty;" on which the counſel, who had been retained by my father to prove me inſane, roſe; and ſtating my caſe, inſiſted on my being tried in due form; for as I was *non compos mentis*, my own accuſation could not be taken; and thus, on the queſtion being again put, I was obliged to plead not guilty. The witneſſes for the crown were now ſworn; the principal of whom were thoſe who entered the garden at the time of my flight, and found the ſquire in the ſummer-houſe weltering in his blood; who all ſwore poſitively to my perſon, as they had a full view of me when I ran down the garden, though they were too much alarmed to purſue me.

The evidence being cloſed, the counſel again endeavoured to prove my inſanity, by relating my extravagant behaviour on my laſt interview with my father; and was going on, when I interrupted him; and expreſſing my determination to give up my life in expiation for the crime I had committed, related the whole of my life, without concealing anything; which taſk I performed in ſo conciſe a manner, that the jury retired fully convinced of my being in my right ſenſes; and, after an abſence of an hour, returned with the

dreadful verdict of guilty. An universal murmur ran through the court, and I was led back to the prison amid the prayers of the spectators, there to wait the execution of my sentence; and now the morning is come when your ill-fated friend must pay for all the faults that a mind wounded with repeated injuries has drawn him into. Adieu! my friend, remember me sometimes with pity; and oh! if it is not too great a favour, see me laid by the dear remains of my departed Emma."

Thus ended the manuscript; and from the messenger the afflicted Tradewell learnt that his last moments were replete with penitence, and that he died expressing his forgiveness of his enemies; while the obdurate monster Mr. Winson, finding himself hated by the world, and worn out with the upbraidings of a guilty conscience, had put an end to his existence by poison, soon after the untimely death of a son, who, but for his cruel and oppressive treatment, might have been an useful member and ornament of society.

The worthy merchant, as soon as he had recovered from the first emotions of grief into which this affecting narrative had thrown him, set off to perform the request of his departed friend; which done, he caused an elegant monument to be erected at his own expence, as a memento of the unexampled events which had taken place by permitting passion to overcome reason, of which desolation is the certain consequence; and as a solemn proof that he who sheds the blood of another, must pay for it with his own.

FINIS.

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